4.12 AESTHETIC/VISUAL RESOURCES

The Visual Resources section describes the onshore and offshore visual environments in the Ellwood area and addresses the potential for the proposed Project to cause significant impacts on the visual resources in the Project vicinity and its regional context. Potential impacts to visual resources created by the Project and potential Alternatives are based on a change from existing conditions. Significance criteria are used to assess the significance of the impacts, and whether MMs can be applied to reduce the level of significance.

The analysis in this section is based on field surveys of the Project study area and surrounding area and also incorporates by reference the conclusions of the EMT EIR regarding area visual resources and the potential impact on such resources associated with operation of the EMT, and summarizes these where appropriate. Where this document relies upon MMs contained in the EMT EIR to address Project impacts, these are summarized to allow report reviewers to understand the relationship of the MMs to the Project. This document also incorporates data from Santa Barbara County 01-ND-34 and city of Goleta 06-ND-001.

Analysis of Visual Impacts

Impacts to aesthetics and visual resources are determined by identifying the visual sensitivity and visual character of an environment. Visual impacts are then evaluated in the context of the character of these views.

Visual Sensitivity

Visual sensitivity is defined as the public attitudes about specific views, or interrelated views, and is a key factor in assessing how important a visual impact may be and whether or not it represents a significant impact. Visual sensitivity has three defined levels:

High Sensitivity. High sensitivity suggests that at least some part of the public is likely to react strongly to a threat to visual quality. Concern is expected to be great because the affected views are rare, unique, or in other ways are special to the region or locale. A highly concerned public is assumed to be more aware of any given level of adverse change and less tolerant than a public that has little concern. A small modification of the existing landscape may be visually distracting to a highly sensitive public and represent a substantial reduction in visual quality.

Table 4.12-1. Indicators of Visual Sensitivity

High Sensitivity
▪ Views of and from areas the aesthetic values of which are protected in laws, public regulations and policies, and public planning documents; ▪ Views of and from designated areas of aesthetic, recreational, cultural, or scientific interest, including national, State, county, and community parks, reserves, memorials, scenic roads, trails, interpretive sites of scientific value, scenic overlooks, recreation areas, and historic structures, sites, and districts; ▪ Views of and from areas or sites of cultural/religious importance to Native Americans; ▪ Views from national- or State-designated scenic highways or roads, or designated scenic highways or roads of regional importance; ▪ Views from resort areas; ▪ Views from urban residential subdivisions; and ▪ Views from segments of travel routes, such as roads, rail lines, pedestrian and equestrian trails, and bicycle paths near designated areas of aesthetic, recreational, cultural, or scientific interest leading directly to them. Views seen while approaching an area of interest may be closely related to the appreciation of the aesthetic, cultural, scientific, or recreational significance of that destination.
Moderate Sensitivity
▪ Views from segments of travel routes near highly sensitive use areas of interest, serving as a secondary access route to those areas; ▪ Views from rural residential areas and segments of roads near them which serve as their primary access route; ▪ Views of and from undesignated but protected or popularly used or appreciated areas of aesthetic, recreational, cultural, or scientific significance at the local, county, or State level; ▪ Views from highways or roads locally designated as scenic routes and of importance only to the local population, or informally designated as such in literature, road maps, and road atlases; ▪ Views from travel routes, such as roads, trails, bicycle paths, and equestrian trails leading directly to protected or popularly used undesignated areas important for their aesthetic, recreational, cultural, or scientific interest; and ▪ Views of and from religious facilities and cemeteries.
Low Sensitivity
▪ Views from travel routes serving as secondary access to moderately sensitive areas; ▪ Views from farmsteads, or groupings of fewer than four residences; and ▪ Views from industrial research/development, commercial, and agricultural use areas.

Moderate Sensitivity. Moderate sensitivity suggests that the public would probably voice some concern over substantial visual impacts. Often the affected views are secondary in importance or are similar to others commonly available to the public. Noticeably adverse changes would probably be tolerated if the essential character of the views remains dominant.

Low Sensitivity. Low sensitivity is considered to prevail where the public is expected to have little or no concern about changes in the landscape. This may be because the affected views are not "public" (not accessible to the public) or because there are no indications that the affected views are valued by the public. For instance, little public

concern for aesthetics is assumed to pertain to views from industrial, commercial, and purely agricultural areas. There are exceptions: some agricultural areas are prized for their open space value, and views of such are highly sensitive. Visual sensitivity is low for views from all sites, areas, travel routes, and sections of travel routes not identified as moderate or high in sensitivity.

Visual Character

The visual character of a landscape is typically described in terms of its land forms, vegetation, water features, and the "built" features of the environment. There are three objectives in assessing visual character. One is to identify the types of features considered to be inherent to the area, those features that are expressive of the prevailing land uses or of the ecological processes in the natural landscape. The second objective is to identify patterns or distribution of features characteristic of the affected setting. The third objective is to describe the existing quality of the visual resources, which varies inversely with how noticeable incongruous features may be within public views. The current visual quality of the physical environment is described as its existing visual condition, which is defined in terms of four Visual Modification Classes (VMC), noted in Table 4.12-2.

Table 4.12-2. Visual Modification Class (VMC) Definitions

VMC	Definition
1	**Not noticeable** Changes in the landscape are within the field of view but generally would be overlooked by all but the most concerned and interested viewers; they generally would not be noticed unless pointed out (inconspicuous because of such factors as distance, screening, low contrast with context, or other features in view, including the adverse impacts of past activities).
2	**Noticeable, visually subordinate** Changes in the landscape would not be overlooked (noticeable to most without being pointed out); they may attract some attention but do not compete for it with other features in the field of view, including the adverse impacts of past activities. Such changes often are perceived as being in the background.
3	**Distracting, visually co-dominant** Changes in the landscape compete for attention with other features in view, including the adverse impacts of past activities (attention is drawn to the change about as frequently as to other features in the landscape).
4	**Visually dominant, demands attention** Changes in the landscape are the focus of attention and tend to become the subject of the view; such changes often cause a lasting impression on the affected landscape.

4.12.1 Environmental Setting

Onshore Visual Environment

The Project area is located on the beach within the Ellwood Coast, an area widely recognized for its scenic beauty. The natural environment of the Project area consists of open sandy beach and dune vegetation interspersed with urban development. Significant visual resources include views of open water, bluffs, and an area of wetland at Bell Creek. The Project area is used for both passive (beach walks, bird watching) and active recreation (Sandpiper Golf Course). Public beach access is provided near the Project site at Bacara Resort/Haskell's Beach approximately one-half mile west of Pier 421-1. Beach access in this area is constrained during periods of high tide and by the flow of water from Bell Canyon Creek. Figure 4.12-1 shows existing beach access under the existing piers during low tide. Bell Creek is a sensitive environmental habitat that is extensively vegetated with native and non-native plant species. It serves as a nesting habitat for avian species, as well as a number of State and federally listed species, including the tidewater goby, California red-legged frog, and potentially steelhead trout. For beachgoers and birdwatchers, Bell Canyon Creek is a significant visual feature.

Development in the area includes the Sandpiper Golf Course, the EOF, PRC 421, the EMT, Bird Island, and facilities associated with the Bacara Resort such as tennis courts, public restrooms, and pedestrian access from a public parking lot at Haskell's Beach. The Sandpiper Golf Course, a public golf course, is located on a bluff just north of and adjacent to the Project area, but at a higher elevation that makes PRC 421 only partially visible to golfers. Although dirt access roads serving the EOF and piers exist, there are no public trails from the golf course to the beach. The beach provides the only public access to the Project site. The EOF is the last oil and gas processing plant located in the city of Goleta. Once considered to be located in a remote area, the EOF now lies between Sandpiper Golf Course and the Bacara Resort (see Figure 2-2). Piers 421-1 and 421-2 have been part of the visual setting for over 75 years, or since the mid-1920s. A man-made access road and rock revetment leading to Pier 421-1 and Pier 421-2 runs alongside the toe of a bluff that extends to the end of the State Lease boundary. In addition to onshore oil and gas facilities, the converted platforms of the old State Lease 421 pier extension, commonly known as "Bird Island" exists offshore from the Project area.

FIGURE 4.12-1. CURRENT VIEW OF PIER 421-2 FROM THE BEACH SHOWING PEDESTRIAN BEACH ACCESS

Existing prominent oil and gas facilities may detract from the open views of the water, bluffs and wetland vegetation. Other manmade facilities exist within the viewshed, including the rock revetment, access roads, EOF, and the Sandpiper Golf Course; however, the pier structures are more prominent than these other facilities.

Secondary Project components include the EMT and barge Jovalan, which is also located within the Ellwood Coast in an area called the Ellwood-Devereux Coast. The EMT is located approximately one and one-half mile east of the existing piers. Due to its proximity to the Ellwood Mesa Open Space, residential areas in the city of Goleta, and UCSB, the Ellwood-Devereux Coast is much more actively used by beach walkers, bird watchers, and surfers than the Bacara Resort/Haskell's Beach area. The open space areas allow for expansive views of the ocean, bluffs, beaches, estuaries, and mountains.

Offshore Visual Environment

The offshore visual environment associated with the proposed Project is frequently enjoyed by commercial and recreational fishermen, surfers, swimmers, and boaters. Views of PRC 421 from the ocean are unobscured and the piers do stand out on the sand. In a regional context, however, the piers blend in with the development in the region including the Ellwood Pier, the EOF, Sandpiper Golf Course, Platform Holly, the EMT and its associated offshore components including mooring buoys and barge loading operations, and the barge Jovalan (Figure 4.12-2).

FIGURE 4.12-2. HISTORIC VIEW OF PROJECT SITE FROM OFFSHORE SHOWING EXISTING ACCESS ROAD, ROCK REVETMENT, AND SANDPIPER GOLF COURSE

The barge Jovalan, a secondary Project component, is a visually dominant feature in the coastal views. In addition to views of the barge itself, the barge Jovalan is equipped with three sets of floodlights that provide deck lighting and illuminate the water around the barge to a distance of approximately 200 feet. These lights are visible from the beach and bluffs, and are brighter than the visible lights on Platform Holly.

Visual Sensitivity and Classification of the Ellwood Coast

The visual sensitivity of the area is determined to be moderate, as defined in Table 4.12-1, which suggests that the public would voice some concern over substantial visual impacts. However, noticeable changes would probably be tolerated if the essential open space character of the views remains dominant. Changes to the current visual quality of the physical environment would be classified as VMC 2: Noticeable, visually subordinate.

Changes in the landscape would not be overlooked (noticeable to most without being pointed out); they may attract some attention but do not compete for it with other features in the field of view, including the adverse impacts of past activities. Such changes often are perceived as being in the background.

4.12.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

The Federal CZMA of 1972, as administered by the State of California, applies to this Project.

State

California Coastal Act § 30000 et seq.

Protection of scenic and visual qualities of coastal resources is an issue of high importance, and thus is addressed by several sections of the Coastal Act. Specifically, the Coastal Act is concerned with protecting the public viewshed, including views from public areas, such as highways, roads, beaches, coastal trails, and access ways, rather than views from private residences where no public views are available. Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states: "Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural landforms, to be visually compatible with the character of the surrounding area, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas."

Local

City of Goleta GP/CLUP Visual and Historic Resources Element

The Goleta GP/CLUP Visual and Historic Resources Element policies VH1.1, VH1.2, and VH1.5 apply to the proposed Project. Policy VH1.1 states that Goleta shall support

the protection and preservation of the Pacific shoreline, including beaches, dunes, lagoons, coastal bluffs, and open coastal mesas. Policy VH1.2 refers to a Scenic Resources Map which identifies the coastline and Hollister Avenue as public vantage points for viewing scenic resources. Policy VH1.5 states that views of open space from public areas shall be preserved. To minimize impacts to scenic resources, the following standard regulatory conditions would be applied to the proposed Project, where appropriate, as part of the city of Goleta Development Plan permit.

a. Limitations on the height and size of structures;

b. Downcast, fully shielded, full cut off lighting of the minimum intensity needed for the purpose;

c. Use of landscaping for screening purposes and /or minimizing view blockage as appropriate; and

d. Selection of color and materials that harmonize with the surrounding landscape.

Santa Barbara County

The Santa Barbara County LCP recognizes that industrial and energy facilities, particularly when sited within view corridors, may represent major impacts on scenic and visual resources. The Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element Visual Resources Policy 1 states that "All commercial, industrial, planned development shall be required to submit a landscaping plan to the county for approval."

Similarly, Local Coastal Policy 6-2 states that a plan for eliminating or substantially mitigating adverse impacts on scenic resources due to siting, construction, or operation of facilities shall accompany a Development Plan filed with the Petroleum Administrator.

UCSB Long Range Development Plan

The 1990 UCSB Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) was established to identify the physical development necessary to achieve the Campus' academic goals and provide a land use plan to guide the development of future facilities. The LRDP is also intended to respond to the provisions of the California Coastal Act of 1976, with respect to the preparation of Long Range Development Plans for Campuses in the Coastal Zone. The UCSB considers and protects the scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas as a resource of public importance (PRC § 30251). The LRDP states that "Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and

scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas."

4.12.3 Significance Criteria

Visual impacts are considered significant if one or a combination of the following apply:

- The project is inconsistent with or in violation of public policies, goals, plans, laws, regulations or other directives concerning visual resources;
- Routine operations and maintenance visually contrast with or degrade the character of the viewshed;
- The project results in a perceptible reduction of visual quality, lasting for more than one year that is seen from moderately to highly sensitive viewing positions. A perceptible reduction of visual quality occurs when, for a highly sensitive view, the visual condition is lowered by at least one Visual Modification Class (VMC); or for a moderately sensitive view, the condition is lowered by at least two VMCs;
- Night lighting would result in glare conditions affecting nearby residences; or
- Because of the time factor involved in oil dispersion, visual impacts from spills are considered to be significant (Class I, i.e., a significant impact that remains significant after mitigation) if first response efforts would not contain or clean up the spill, resulting in residual impacts that would be visible to the general public on shoreline or water areas.

4.12.4 Impact Analysis and Mitigation

The visual resources assessment focuses on identifying potentially significant impacts, with the analysis directed toward public views in which the Project would be most visible. Critical views are partly defined as those that are moderately to highly sensitive. The public is considered to have a substantial concern over adverse changes in the quality of such views. Critical views also are defined as being those public views that would be most affected by the subject action, e.g., the greatest intensity of impact due to viewer proximity to the Project and duration of the affected view. Critical views in the Project area were identified as those from the beach and bluffs toward the onshore and offshore portions of the Project located at the Ellwood Coast (Pier 421-1 and 421-2) and Ellwood-Devereux Coast (increased use of barge Jovalan).

Impact VR-1: Visual Effects from Construction Activities at PRC 421

Construction activities would create negative visual impacts (Potentially Significant, Class II).

Construction activities associated with implementation of the proposed Project would have potentially significant short-term impacts to the visual quality of the Project area. The visual environment would be disturbed by construction equipment (particularly the large workover rig), construction fencing, construction materials, and occasional stockpiling of debris on the upper reaches of the beach overnight for pick up and removal the next day for the duration of the 45 day construction schedule. Given that the visual environment at PRC 421 is enjoyed daily by beach goers, golfers, boaters, fishermen, and surfers, views in the Project area would be significantly degraded on a daily basis for the duration of the construction activities; however, these impacts would be temporary and no permanent changes to the visual character of the area would occur as a result of the Project. Night lighting would likely be used infrequently and for short periods of time, since by necessity, work on the Project would need to be performed during low tide, which occurs late in the day during the fall and early winter months when natural lighting is low.

Mitigation Measures for Impact VR-1: Visual Effects from Construction Activities at PRC 421

MM VR-1a. Use Laydown Areas for Overnight Storage of Equipment. Equipment placed on the beach shall be returned to the laydown areas at the end of each workday, both for public safety and for aesthetic considerations.

MM VR-1b. Caution Tape around Materials Placed on Beach. Materials temporarily placed on the upper reaches of the beach shall be roped-off with caution tape and removed within 24 hours in most cases.

MM VR-1c. Material Removal at Construction Completion. All materials, equipment, and debris shall be removed from the site upon completion of the Project construction.

MM VR-1d. Minimal Night Lighting. Night lighting shall be used minimally, and only for short periods of time.

MM VR-1e. No Night Lighting After 7 p.m. Night lighting and work shall not occur past the 7 p.m. work stoppage deadline.

Rationale for Mitigation

The above MMs would reduce the amount of time construction equipment would be visible from the beach and minimize the use of night lighting, thereby reducing visual impacts from construction activities.

Impact VR-2: Visual Effects from Accidental Oil Spills

Implementation of the proposed Project would increase the likelihood of oil spill from primary or secondary Project components, including the piers, associated pipelines, barge Jovalan (Significant, Class I).

A moderate to large spill from the proposed Project could cause visual impacts ranging from oil sheens to heavy oiling including floating lumps of tar. Heavy crude oil may disappear over the duration of several days, with remaining heavy fractions floating at or near the surface in the form of mousse, tarballs, or mats, and lasting from several weeks to several months. Therefore, the presence of oil on the water would change the color and, in heavier oiling, textural appearance of the water surface. Oil on shoreline surfaces or near shore marsh areas would cover these surfaces with a brownish-blackish, gooey substance.

Such oiling would result in a negative impression of the highly sensitive viewshed. The public would likely react negatively to the visual effects. Without rapid containment by immediate booming and cleanup, the visual effects of even a small spill of up to 10 barrels can leave residual impacts, and can be significant.

The impact of a spill could last for a long period of time, depending on the level of physical impact and clean up effectiveness. Even in events where light oiling would disperse rapidly, significant impacts are expected. In events where medium to heavy oiling occurs over a widespread area, and where first response cleanup efforts are not effective, leaving residual effects of oiling, significant impacts would be expected. The physical efforts associated with the cleanup efforts themselves would contribute to a negative impression of the environment and the visual impact. It is impossible to predict with any certainty the potential consequences of spills; therefore visual impacts are considered significant (Class I).

Mitigation Measures for Impact VR-2: Visual Effects from Accidental Oil Spills

Implementation of those measures identified in Sections 4.2, Safety; 4.3, Hazardous Materials; 4.5 Hydrology, Water Resources, and Water Quality, 4.6, Marine

Biological Resources; and 4.7 Terrestrial Biological Resources for contingency planning and spill response shall be required.

Rationale for Mitigation

The measures presented in the above-mentioned sections provide improved oil spill capabilities, oil spill containment measures, and protection of resources; however, even with implementation of those measures, the risk to the visual environment may be significant, even for small spills.

Residual Impacts

Even with successful implementation of MMs for oil spill impacts, visual resources may be affected by spills and impacts would remain potentially significant.

Impact VR-3: Cyclonic Separator on Pier 421-2 Noticeable to Beach Walkers

Long-term impacts associated with the installation of the cyclonic separator on Pier 421-2 would be noticeable to beach walkers, but would be subservient in appearance to and visually compatible with existing structures (Less than Significant, Class III).

Impact Discussion

Long-term impacts to the visual and aesthetic environment would be compatible with the visual character of existing pier structures. Further, at the end of the Project life, all components of PRC 421 would be removed and the visual environment would be returned to its natural state. While installation of the cyclonic separator on Pier 421-2 would be noticeable to beach walkers due to its height and color, given the industrial nature of the site, the proposed new equipment would be subservient in appearance to existing structures and this impact would be less than significant as it would not result in the creation of structures that are visually incompatible with the visual character of the existing pier structures (Figure 4.12-3).

Mitigation Measures

MM VR-3a. Camouflage Equipment. Although this impact is less than significant, it could be reduced by painting new equipment an appropriate exterior color, such as a matte grey-blue, that would visually recede the equipment into the background.

FIGURE 4.12-3. PHOTO SIMULATION OF PIER 421-2 AFTER PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Rationale for Mitigation

Incorporation of MM VR-3a would minimize the long-term visual impact related to the proposed Project.

Impacts Related to Future Transportation Options

For the purposes of this aesthetics/visual resources analysis, it is assumed that Line 96 and the EMT would be used to transport crude oil recovered from PRC 421 using the barge Jovalan to ship the oil to a Los Angeles or San Francisco Bay area refinery through approximately the year 2013. However, as discussed earlier in this EIR (Sections 1.2.4, 2.4.2, and 3.3.6), several options exist for future transportation of oil from the Project, each with different potential impacts to aesthetics. These include ongoing use of the EMT through 2013, use of a pipeline to Las Flores Canyon, and trucking of oil to Venoco's ROSF Facility 35 miles to the south and subsequent transport to Los Angeles via pipeline. The potential visual impacts from transportation using the existing EMT system are fully described above (see Impacts VR-1 through VR-3).

However, because the timing and exact mode of transportation of produced oil after the initial five years of Project operation are speculative at this point in time, the potential impacts of use of a pipeline or trucking are only briefly summarized here and are fully disclosed as part of the alternatives analysis (Section 4.12.6; Impacts VR-4 and VR-5). If neither option is permitted nor available by the cessation of operation of the EMT, production from PRC 421 would be stranded, at least temporarily, until an alternative transportation mode is approved and becomes available.

Transportion of oil through an 8.5-mile pipeline from the EOF to the AAPL at Las Flores Canyon could create potentially signficant aesthetic impacts though an increased potential for spills from such a pipeline. Although the timing of construction of the new pipeline is uncertain, transportion of oil via pipeline could commence as early as 2009 or 2010, resulting in 10 or more years of transportation by pipeline. Although pipelines are generally the safest method available for the tansporation of crude oil, spills could occur through accidental damage to the pipeline caused by natural (e.g., seismic activity, flooding) or man made casues (e.g., construction activity, valve failure). Although of low probability, the potential exists for the occurrence of such a spill over the lifetime of the Project and would be considered signficant and unavoidable (see Impact VR-2).

Future transportation of oil via a combination of trucking for 35 miles from the EOF to the ROSF and via existing pipline south to Los Angeles would incrementally increase the potential for spills. However, under the proposed Project, trucking would commence no earlier than 2013, and would involve not more than 2 trucks per day carrying 160 barrels of oil each, declining to 1 truck per day in the later years of Project operation (see Section 3.3.6, Transportation Sub-Alternative Options, Table 3-2). Based upon the projected frequency of trucking and the distances traveled, shipment of oil via trucking would not be expected to create signficant visual impacts due to the insignifcant potential for accidents to occur. Similarly, the shipment of oil via existing pipeline which already transports substantial amounts of crude oil would not be expected to measureably increase visual impacts as the failure rate for such pipelines is a function of pipeline length rather than increased throughput. The pipelines would not be modified by the addition of PRC 421 crude oil; therefore, the spill frequencies for the respective pipeline would be unchanged by the proposed Project.

Table 4.12-3. Summary of Aesthetics/Visual Resources Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impact	Mitigation Measures
VR-1: Visual Effects from Construction Activities at PRC 421	**VR-1a.** Use Laydown Areas for Overnight Storage of Equipment. **VR-1b.** Caution Tape around Materials Placed on Beach. **VR-1c.** Material Removal at Construction Completion. **VR-1d.** Minimal Night Lighting. **VR-1e.** No Night Lighting After 7 p.m.
VR-2: Visual Effects from Accidental Oil Spills	Implementation of those measures identified in Sections 4.2, Safety; 4.5 Hydrology, Water Resources, and Water Quality, 4.6, Marine Biological Resources; and 4.7 Terrestrial Biological Resources.
VR-3: Cyclonic Separator on Pier 421-2 Noticeable to Beach Walkers	**VR-3a.** Camouflage Equipment.

4.12.5 Impacts of Alternatives

No Project Alternative

Under this Alternative, there would be no production at PRC 421, and the facilities would be decommissioned (under a separate evaluation). The No Project Alternative would avoid the majority of impacts associated with production, transfer, and transportation of crude oil produced from PRC 421. However, until the PRC 421 is fully abandoned, potentially significant impacts could occur though the partial collapse of portions or all of either of the caissons (See Section 4.2.5, Safety). Such a collapse and the subsequent release of oil contaminated sands onto area beaches and potentially into the ocean, would result in impacts similar to those of the proposed Project (see Impact VR-2).

As noted in Section 2.1.1, the CSLC has concerns about the potential for pressure to build up in the reservoir, causing oil to escape from wells that were abandoned in the 1940s and 1950s. This concern is based on observations following the 1994 shut-in of the PRC 421 wells. However, insufficient data exist to quantify the actual potential for such leaks to occur, their exact location or the size of such leaks; therefore it would be speculative to identify either the frequency or potential severity of such impacts at this time. However, if such a leak were to occur, impacts would be similar to those of the proposed Project (see Impact VR-2).

The eventual removal of components of PRC 421 would be considered a beneficial impact since removal of the piers would allow a greater view of the Pacific Ocean and

other sensitive viewsheds of the Ellwood-Devereux Coast. If the structural components of PRC 421 are left in place, no change would occur to the existing visual setting. Therefore, there would be no impacts to visual resources. The potential effects of decommissioning the facilities would be evaluated in a separate analysis.

No Project Alternative with Pressure Testing

Under the No Project Alternative with Pressure Testing, no oil production would occur at PRC 421, deliveries at the EMT would not increase, and oil would not be transported by either pipeline or tanker truck. Piers 421-1 and 421-2 would be decommissioned under an accelerated schedule and structural components would either be left in place or removed. Removal of all components of PRC 421 would be considered a beneficial impact because removal of the piers would allow a greater view of the Pacific Ocean and other sensitive viewsheds of the Ellwood-Devereux Coast. The specific impacts will be analyzed fully in the CEQA document associated with the Abandonment and Restoration Plan prepared by Venoco. If the structural components of PRC 421 are left in place, no change would occur to the existing visual setting. Therefore, there would be no impacts. During pressure testing, there would be short-term adverse visual effects similar to, although of much shorter duration, than those associated with the proposed project.

Onshore Oil Separation at the EOF

This Alternative would eliminate the Gas-Liquid Cyclone Separator (GLCS) and Liquid-Liquid Hydrocyclone Separator equipment from the platform of Pier 421-2 by processing the oil at the EOF. Nuisance noise, defined as perceptible noise that is inconsistent with the expectations of a person enjoying the coastal environment, would also be eliminated. Under this Alternative, Pier 421-1 would not be required for water re-injection and the decommissioning of Pier 421-1 would be accelerated. The accelerated decommissioning would require submittal of a decommissioning plan for Pier 421-1 to the CSLC and the city of Goleta within approximately 6 months of approval of this Alternative. The decommissioning plan would be subject to further environmental review. Because Pier 421-1 would be removed more rapidly and Pier 421-2 would remain in place with few perceptible changes after the construction is completed, this Alternative would have fewer impacts than the proposed Project. Painting new equipment such as control panels or meter enclosures a matte blue-grey color to blend with the color of the ocean and sky would reduce visual impact further. This Alternative would also eliminate the visual impact associated with the additional 15-foot-tall and 12-foot-tall equipment on Pier 421-2.

Recommissioning Using Historic Production Methods Alternative

Figure 4.12–4 displays a view of the historic production methods using a beach well located on 421-2. Recommissioning using historic methods would replace aging equipment shown in the photo with state-of-the-art equipment. The photo shows that steel tanks contrast and stand out against the color of the ocean and beach. In addition the movement of the pump and its associated noise would call a viewer's attention to it. This alternative would have significant, unavoidable aesthetic/visual impacts since it would be inconsistent with the expectations of a person enjoying the beach. Painting proposed facilities would reduce, but not eliminate the increased visual intrusion or noise associated with the equipment and MM VR-3a would still apply.

FIGURE 4.12-4. HISTORIC PHOTO (HISTORIC RECONFIGURATION OF EXISTING)

Re-injection at Platform Holly

Under this Alternative, production would resume at PRC 421 as described under the proposed Project; however, water would be sent to Platform Holly, via the EOF, for re-injection instead of initially using Well 421-1 and switching to re-injection at Platform

Holly later in the Project, as described in the Project description. Pier 421-1 would not be required for water re-injection and the decommissioning of Pier 421-1 would be accelerated. The accelerated decommissioning would require submittal of a decommissioning plan for Pier 421-1 to the CSLC and the city of Goleta within approximately 6 months of approval of this Alternative, and would be subject to further environmental review. As described in Section 3.3.5, this Alternative would require alterations to platform Holly; which may result in short term construction impacts similar to those described for the proposed Project (see VR-1). All other aspects of the proposed Project would be the same. Therefore, impacts to visual resources would be less than that described for the proposed Project, and MMs VR-1a through VR-1e would apply.

Transportation Sub-Alternative Options

Pipeline Sub-Alternative

Impact VR-4: Visual Effects from Pipeline Installation

Installation of the pipeline would result in the removal of existing vegetation along the pipeline right-of-way, altering the visual character of the area (Potentially Significant, Class II).

Impact Discussion

Clearing and excavation to install the pipeline would occur primarily along Calle Real and private roads. After completion of the pipeline installation, the trench would be filled and the ground graded to pre-construction conditions. However, the strip along the pipeline route where vegetation was removed would remain visible from public roads, such as Highway 101. The removal of natural vegetation would alter the visual character of the landscape visible from public areas. This visual impact would be considered potentially significant (Class II).

Mitigation Measure

MM VR-4a. Revegetation of Pipeline Right of Way. The Applicant shall revegetate the cleared portion of the pipeline right-of-way only with native species that are biologically and visually compatible with the surroundings and continue with the appropriate watering and weeding schedule, if necessary, for establishing the permanent vegetative cover.

Rationale for Mitigation

Revegetating the cleared pipeline right-of-way would ensure that the visual impact is reduced in the shortest possible time. Waiting for natural revegetation to occur would prolong the visual impact, possibly for years, given the slow growth of the native vegetation of the area. In addition, non-native invasive species would most likely invade the cleared area first, further reducing the successful re-colonization of the right-of-way strip by native species.

Trucking Sub-Alternative

Under the truck transportation sub-alternative option, the produced oil would be transported to the ROSF rather than being shipped by barge through the EMT.

Under this sub-alternative option, a truck loading rack would be constructed at the EOF to accommodate the necessary truck loading requirements. A truck unloading rack would be required at the Carpinteria facility to transfer crude oil from the truck to an existing storage tank at the facility. The crude oil would be co-mingled with production from Venoco's Carpinteria facility and transported via pipeline to Los Angeles area refineries.

Construction of the loading and unloading racks would occur in each facility's fenced area; no additional land would be required. The presence of the loading and unloading racks would be compatible with the existing industrial nature of the facilities and would not result in a change in the visual character of the facilities.

Impact VR-5: Visual Effects from Truck Transportation

Increased presence of heavy trucks would create negative visual impacts (Less Than Significant, Class III).

Impact Discussion

Under this sub-alternative option, approximately two roundtrip truck trips per day would be required to transport crude oil to the ROSF. The increased presence of trucks on existing roads would be expected to result in adverse, but less than significant visual impacts (Class III).

Mitigation Measure

None required.

4.12.6 Cumulative Projects Impact Analysis

Cumulative impacts associated with the proposed Project include the continued urbanization of the Ellwood area, including the proposed expansion of the Bacara Resort, improvements to Sandpiper Golf Course, expanded oil and gas recovery associated with Ellwood Full Field Development, and extension of barge Jovalan activities at the EMT. The proposed Project would call attention to the existing piers and increase the public's awareness of oil production occurring in the region. Depending on the viewer's personal and cultural interpretation of oil production, this awareness would likely be a detriment to their coastal experience.

Ship movements along the outer coast and in the Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay areas are part of an established pattern of activity that has occurred for many years and will continue to occur over the period of the proposed Project. The barge Jovalan contributes to that activity. These vessel movements are an acceptable visual action. The effect of the barge Jovalan's presence on the cumulative visual environment would result in adverse changes, but less than significant impacts (Class III).